

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03695 050638Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02
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R 040730Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8539
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USDOC WASHDC

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ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EALR ECRP ECRE LE
SUBJ: REBUILDING DOWNTOWN BEIRUT

REFS: (A) BEIRUT 3529, (B) BEIRUT 2651

1. SUMMARY. GOL AGAIN POSTPONES FORMAL COMMENCEMENT OF
DOWNTOWN RECONSTRUCTION. PROGRESS NEVERTHELESS ACCELERATED
SOMEWHAT IN MAY AND JUNE. END SUMMARY.

2. CITING THE EVENTS IN NORTH LEBANON, COUNCIL OF
DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION (CDR) MEMBER ASSEM SALAM
ANNOUNCED JUNE 27 THAT THE RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS IN
DOWNTOWN BEIRUT WOULD NOT COMMENCE AS SCHEDULED JULY 1.
SALAM RE-POSTPONED THE DATE, PREVIOUSLY POSTPONED FROM
APRIL 1 TO JULY 1 AS A RESULT OF ISRAELI INVASION, UNTIL
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03695 050638Z

SEPTEMBER, "UNLESS GOD FORBID, SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENS TO
FORCE ANOTHER DELAY."

3. RECONSTRUCTION PICTURE DURING SECOND QUARTER 1978
WAS NOT ALTOGETHER BLEAK, HOWEVER. AFTER DATE OF REFTL
(MAY 11), PROGRESS IN THE DOWNTOWN ACCELERATED. A NEW TWO-
STORY MARKET COMPLEX, INTENDED TO ATTRACT BACK TO THE AREA THE

MERCHANTS WHOSE SHANTY "SUKS" HAVE UGLIFIED RAOUSHE AND OTHER OUTLYING DISTRICTS, WAS NEAR COMPLETION BY JULY 1 IMMEDIATELY WEST OF THE FIRST PORT BASIN. SCAFFOLDING WENT UP IN MID-JUNE AROUND THE OLD MUNICIPALITY BUILDING AND ON THE AL-OMAR MOSQUE ACROSS THE STREET. OTHER LARGE OFFICE BUILDINGS SUCH AS THE AZMI-GHAZI BUILDING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE PLACE DES MARTYRS AND THE ARAB BANK BUILDING ON RIAD-SOLH STREET WERE BEING REPAIRED AS WAS THE STARCO CENTER. REF (A) REPORTED NAJIB SALHA'S INTENTION TO RESTORE THE LARGER OF THE PHOENICIA HOTEL TOWERS FOR OPENING WITHIN 12 MONTHS. REPAIR OF STREET LEVEL RETAIL SHOPS CONTINUED TO RADIATE GRADUALLY FROM THE PLACE DES MARTYRS.

4. EVENTS OF PAST 48 HOURS OBVIOUSLY OVERTAKE ANY HOPE OF FURTHER ACCELERATION OF RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT. IT IS TOO EARLY YET TO ASSESS DAMAGE INFLICTED NIGHT OF JULY 2-3, BUT BUILDINGS IN AND NEAR PORT CONTINUED TO SMOLDER MORNING JULY 3 AND MORTAR FIRE COULD BE HEARD FROM SYRIAN POSITIONS NEAR PHOENICIA HOTEL. PARKER

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Message Attributes

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